



5 tools for managing conflict effectively...

Conflict is often viewed as bad and to be avoided at all costs, but with the right tools in your kit, it can be constructive and result in more cooperation. The next time World War III threatens to break out over whose turn it is to share in the household tasks or who's at fault for something that didn't get done, experiment with these...

Your positive conflict tool kit

These five suggestions can help change conflict into collaborative negotiation that builds respect rather than burning it.

1. **Avoid asking "Why...?"**. No one likes to be asked, "Why did you...?" or "Why didn't you...?" Try, "What happened...", "Where were you...", "How do you..." or "When will you...". These questions draw out detail, open up the conversation and are less likely to put people on the defensive.
2. Stay with the point at hand and **avoid turning a recent infringement into a tirade**. The past is past. Solutions lie in the future and require careful collaboration now.
3. **Listen** to the other party's perspective carefully and seek a way forward. "So, you didn't do _____ because _____. When will you be able to do it?" (Seek specific commitment.)
4. Be clear about consequences and ensure they're logical and fair. Consequences quite obviously depend on whom you're dealing with. It will be very different if it's a 2 year old, a teenager or a partner. **Apply LOGIC**. *"The dishes didn't get done...I can't cook the next meal until they are. The bike was damaged when it was left behind the car...you'll need to help earn the money to replace it."*
5. Have a positive expectation and ensure you **provide reinforcing feedback when cooperation is shown**. This is the single best way to experience more cooperation; everyone wants to feel good about his or her efforts and be a valued part of the group (family, workplace etc).

Connect and collaborate through conflict

Adopting an approach to conflict that embraces respect and avoids shaming and blaming isn't always easy, but it's so worthwhile. When you model skills for managing conflict effectively you teach others how to build and enjoy stronger relationships too.

Bare Hands is run by allied health professionals committed to helping women embrace positive change by providing access to practical education. To find out more give us a call, email us or visit www.barehands.com.au.

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- ✓ Solutions require careful collaboration.
- ✓ Avoid tirades and employ LOGIC to reduce conflict.
- ✓ Cooperation and trust are the byproducts of conflict done well.

"Peace is not the absence of conflict but the ability to resolve conflict by peaceful means."

Ronald Reagan

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